

**481—51.50 (135B) Minimum standards for construction.**

**51.50(1) *Minimum standards.*** Hospitals and off-site premises licensed under this chapter shall be built in accordance with the following construction standards.

*a.* Construction shall be in accordance with the standards set forth in the Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals and Outpatient Facilities, 2014 edition, produced by the Facility Guidelines Institute.

*b.* A critical access hospital as defined in rule 481—51.1(135B) shall meet the standards for construction set forth in Part 2.4 of the Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals and Outpatient Facilities, 2014 edition, produced by the Facility Guidelines Institute.

*c.* Existing hospitals, critical access hospitals, and off-site premises built in compliance with prior editions of the hospital construction guidelines will be deemed in compliance with subsequent regulations, with the exception of any new structural renovations, additions, functional alterations, or changes in utilization to existing facilities, which shall meet the standards specified in this subrule.

*d.* The design and construction of a hospital or off-site premises shall be in conformance with the provisions of 661—Chapter 205.

*e.* In jurisdictions without a local building code enforcement program, the construction shall be in conformance with the state building code, as authorized by Iowa Code section 103A.7, in effect at the time of plan submittal for review and approval. In jurisdictions with a local building code enforcement program, local building code enforcement must include both the adoption and enforcement of a local building code through plan reviews and inspections.

In any case in which an applicable requirement of 661—Chapter 205 is inconsistent with an applicable requirement of the state building code, the hospital or off-site premises shall be deemed to be in compliance with the state building code requirement if the requirement of 661—Chapter 205 is met.

**51.50(2) *Submission of construction documents.***

*a.* Submissions of architectural technical documents, engineering documents, and plans and specifications to the building code commissioner are the responsibility of the owner of the building or facility, although the actual submission may be completed by an authorized agent of the owner or the responsible design professional.

*b.* Submissions shall comply with the provisions of rule 661—300.4(103A).

*c.* The responsible design professional shall certify that the building plans meet the requirements specified in subrule 51.50(1), unless a variance has been granted pursuant to subrule 51.50(3).

**51.50(3) *Variances.*** The director of the department may grant variances to building and construction guidelines as contained in the Guidelines for Design and Construction of Hospitals and Outpatient Facilities, 2014 edition. The hospital or off-site premises must submit a variance request in writing to the director. The request must demonstrate how patient safety and the quality of care offered will not be compromised by the variance. The facility must demonstrate its ability to completely fulfill all other requirements of the service. The director shall make a written determination of the request. In determining whether a variance request shall be granted, the director shall give consideration to the following conditions and to any other conditions the director deems relevant:

*a.* The design and planning for the specific property shall offer improved or compensating features which provide equivalent desirability and utility;

*b.* Alternate or special construction methods, techniques, and mechanical equipment shall offer equivalent durability; utility; safety; structural strength and rigidity; sanitation; odor control; protection from corrosion, decay and insect attack; and quality of workmanship;

*c.* The health, safety or welfare of any patient shall not be endangered;

*d.* The variance shall be limited to the specific project under consideration and shall not be construed as establishing a precedent for similar acceptance in other cases;

*e.* Occupancy and function of the building shall be considered; and

*f.* The type of licensing shall be considered.

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